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Breeder Reaction

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The advertising game is not as cut and dried as many people think. Sometimes you spend a million dollars and get no results, and then some little low-budget campaign will catch the public's fancy and walk away with merchandising honors of the year.

Let me sound a warning, however. When this happens, watch out! There's always a reason for it, and it isn't always just a matter of bright slogans and semantic genius. Sometimes the product itself does the trick. And when this happens people in the industry lose their heads trying to capitalize on the "freak" good fortune.

This can lead to disaster. May I cite one example?

I was on loan to Elaine Templeton, Inc., the big cosmetics firm, when one of these "prairie fires" took off and, as product engineer from the firm of Bailey Hazlitt & Persons, Advertising Agency, I figured I had struck pure gold. My assay was wrong. It was fool's gold on a pool of quicksand.

Madame "Elaine", herself, had called me in for consultation on a huge lipstick campaign she was planning—you know, NOW AT LAST, A TRULY KISS-PROOF LIPSTICK!—the sort of thing they pull every so often to get the ladies to chuck their old lip-goo and invest in the current dream of non-smearability. It's an old gimmick, and the new product is never actually kiss-proof, but they come closer each year, and the gals tumble for it every time.

Well, they wanted my advice on a lot of details such as optimum shades, a new name, size, shape and design of container. And they were ready to spend a hunk of moolah on the build-up. You see, when they give a product a first-class advertising ride they don't figure on necessarily showing a profit on that particular item. If they break even they figure they are ahead of the game, because the true purpose is to build up the brand name. You get enough women raving over the new Elaine Templeton lipstick, and first thing you know sales start climbing on the whole line of assorted aids to seduction.

Since E. T., Inc., was one of our better accounts, the old man told me to take as long as was needed, so I moved in to my assigned office, in the twelve-story E. T. building, secretary, Scotch supply, ice-bags, ulcer pills and all, and went to work setting up my survey staff. This product engineering is a matter of "cut and try" in some fields. You get some ideas, knock together some samples, try them on the public with a staff of interviewers, tabulate the results, draw your conclusions and hand them over to Production with a prayer. If your ad budget is large enough your prayer is usually answered, because the American Public buys principally on the "we know what we like, and we like what we

know" principle. Make them "know it" and they'll buy it. Maybe in love, absence makes the heart grow fonder, but in this business, familiarity breeds nothing but sales.

Madame Elaine had a fair staff of idea boys, herself. In fact, every other department head had some gimmick he was trying to push to get personal recognition. The Old Hag liked this spirit of initiative and made it plain to me I was to give everyone a thorough hearing.

This is one of the crosses you have to bear. Everyone but the janitor was swarming into my office with suggestions, and more than half of them had nothing to do with the lipstick campaign at all. So I dutifully listened to each one, had my girl take impressive notes and then lifted my left or my right eyebrow at her. My left eyebrow meant file them in the wastebasket. This is how the Atummyc Afterbath Dusting Powder got lost in the shuffle, and later I was credited with launching a new item on which I didn't even have a record.

It came about this way:

Just before lunch one day, one of the Old Hag's promotion-minded pixies flounced her fanny into my interview chair, crossed her knees up to her navel and began selling me her pet project. She was a relative of the Madame as well as a department head, so I had to listen.

Her idea was corny—a new dusting powder with "Atummion" added, to be called, "Atummyc Afterbath Dusting Powder"—"Atummyc", of course, being a far-fetched play on the word "atomic". What delighted her especially was that the intimate, meaningful word "tummy" occurred in her coined trade name, and this was supposed to do wonders in stimulating the imaginations of the young females of man-catching-age.

As I said, the idea was corny. But the little hazel-eyed pixie was not. She was about 24, black-haired, small-waisted and bubbling with hormones. With her shapely knees and low-cut neckline she was a pleasant change of scenery from the procession of self-seeking middle-agers I had been interviewing—not that her motive was any different.

I stalled a little to feast my eyes. "This *Atummion Added* item," I said, "just what is *Atummion*?"

"That's my secret," she said, squinching her eyes at me like a fun-loving little cobra. "My brother is assistant head chemist, and he's worked up a formula of fission products we got from the Atomic Energy Commission for experimentation."

"Fission products!" I said. "That stuff's dangerous!"

"Not this formula," she assured me. "Bob says there's hardly any radiation to it at all. Perfectly harmless."

"Then what's it supposed to do?" I inquired naively.

She stood up, placed one hand on her stomach and the other behind her head, wiggled and stretched. "Atummyc Bath Powder will give milady that wonderful, vibrant, *atomic* feeling," she announced in a voice dripping with innuendo.

"All right," I said, "that's what it's supposed to do. Now what does it really do?"

"Smells good and makes her slippery-dry, like any other talcum," she admitted quite honestly. "It's the name and the idea that will put it across."

"And half a million dollars," I reminded her. "I'm afraid the whole thing is a little too far off the track to consider at this time. I'm here to make a new lipstick go. Maybe later—"

"I appreciate that, but honestly, don't you think it's a terrific idea?"

"I think you're terrific," I told her, raising my left eyebrow at my secretary, "and we'll get around to you one of these days."

"Oh, Mr. Sanders!" she said, exploding those big eyes at me and shoving a half-folded sheet of paper at me. "Would you please sign my interview voucher?"

In Madame Elaine's organization you had to have a written "excuse" for absenting yourself from your department during working hours. I supposed that the paper I signed was no different from the others. Anyway, I was still blinded by the atomic blast of those hazel eyes.

After she left I got to thinking it was strange that she had me sign the interview receipt. I couldn't remember having done that for any other department heads.

I didn't tumble to the pixie's gimmick for a whole month, then I picked up the phone one day and the old man spilled the news. "I thought you were making lipstick over there. What's this call for ad copy on a new bath powder?"

The incident flashed back in my mind, and rather than admit I had been by-passed I lied, "You know the Madame. She always gets all she can for her money."

The old man muttered, "I don't see taking funds from the lipstick campaign and splitting them off into little projects like this," he said. "Twenty-five thousand bucks would get you one nice spread in the Post, but what kind of a one-shot campaign would that be?"

I mumbled excuses, hung up and screamed for the pixie. My

secretary said, "Who?"

"Little sexy-eyes. The Atomic Bath Powder girl."

Without her name it took an hour to dig her up, but she finally popped in, plumped down and began giggling. "You found out."

"How," I demanded, "did you arrange it?"

"Easy. Madame Elaine's in Paris. She gave you a free hand, didn't she?"

I nodded.

"Well, when you signed your okay on the Atummyc—"

"That was an interview voucher!"

"Not—exactly," she said ducking her head.

The damage was done. You don't get ahead in this game by admitting mistakes, and the production department was already packaging and labelling samples of Atummyc Bath Powder to send out to the distributors.

I had to carve the $25,000 out of my lipstick budget and keep my mouth shut. When the ad copy came over from my firm I looked it over, shuddered at the quickie treatment they had given it and turned it loose. Things were beginning to develop fast in my lipstick department, and I didn't have time to chase the powder thing like I should have—since it was my name on the whole damned project.

So I wrote off the money and turned to other things.

We were just hitting the market with Madame Elaine Templeton's "Kissmet" when the first smell of smoke came my way. The pixie came into my office one morning and congratulated me.

"You're a genius!" she said.

"Like the Kissmet campaign, do you?" I said pleased.

"It stinks," she said holding her nose. "But Atummyc Bath Powder will pull you out of the hole."

"Oh, that," I said. "When does it go to market?"

"Done went—a month ago."

"What? Why you haven't had time to get it out of the lab yet. Using a foreign substance, you should have had an exhaustive series of allergy skin tests on a thousand women before—"

"I've been using it for two months myself," she said. "And look at me! See any rashes?"

I focussed my eyes for the first time, and what I saw made me wonder if I were losing my memory. The pixie had been a pretty little French pastry from the first, but now she positively glowed. Her skin even had that "radiant atomic look", right out of our corny, low-budget ad copy.

"What—have you done to yourself, fallen in love?"

"With Atummyc After Bath Powder," she said smugly. "And so have the ladies. The distributors are all reordering."

Well, these drug sundries houses have some sharp salesmen out, and I figured the bath powder must have caught them needing something to promote. It was a break. If we got the $25,000 back it wouldn't hurt my alibi a bit, in case the Kissmet production failed to click.

Three days later the old man called me from the New York branch of our agency. "Big distributor here is hollering about the low budget we've given to this Atummyc Bath Powder thing," he said. "He tells me his men have punched it hard and he thinks it's catching on pretty big. Maybe you better talk the Madame out of a few extra dollars."

"The Old Hag's in Europe," I told him, "and I'm damned if I'll rob the Kissmet Lipstick deal any more. It's mostly spent anyway."

The old man didn't like it. When you get the distributors on your side it pays to back them up, but I was too nervous about the wobbly first returns we were getting on the Kissmet campaign to consider taking away any of the unspent budget and throwing it into the bath powder deal.

The next day I stared at an order from a west coast wholesaler and began to sweat. The pixie fluttered it under my nose. "Two more carloads of Atummyc Bath Powder," she gloated.

"Two more *carloads*?"

"Certainly. All the orders are reading *carloads*," she said. "This thing has busted wide open."

And it had. Everybody, like I said earlier, lost their head. The bath-powder plant was running three shifts and had back-orders chin high. The general manager, a joker name of Jennings, got excited, cabled Madame Elaine to get back here pronto, which she did, and then the panic was on.

The miracle ingredient was this Atummion, and if Atummion sold bath powder why wouldn't it sell face-cream, rouge, mud-packs, shampoos, finger-nail polish and eye-shadow?

For that matter, the Old Hag wanted to know, why wouldn't it sell Kissmet Lipstick?

The answer was, of course, that the magic legend "Contains the Exclusive New Beauty Aid, Atummion" *did* sell these other products. Everything began going out in carload lots as soon as we had the new labels printed, and to be truthful, I breathed a wondrous sigh of relief, because up to that moment my Kissmet campaign had promised to fall flat on its lying, crimson face.

The staggering truth about Atummion seeped in slowly. Item one: Although we put only a pinch of it in a whole barrel of talcum powder, *it did give the female users a terrific* complexion! Pimples, black-heads, warts, freckles and even minor scars disappeared after a few weeks, and from the very first application users mailed us testimonials swearing to that "atomic feeling of loveliness".

Item two: About one grain of Atummion to the pound of lipstick brought out the natural color of a woman's lips and maintained it there*even after the lipstick was removed*.

Item three: There never was such a shampoo. For once the ad copywriters failed to exceed the merits of their product. Atummion-tinted hair took on a sparkling look, a soft texture and a *natural-appearing wave* that set beauty-operators screaming for protection.

These beauticians timed their complaint nicely. It got results on the morning that the whole thing began to fall to pieces.

About ten A. M. Jennings called a meeting of all people concerned in the Atummyc Powder project, and they included me as well as the pixie and her brother, the assistant chemist.

Everyone was too flushed with success to take Jennings' opening remark too seriously. "It looks like we've got a winner that's about to lose us our shirts," he said.

He shuffled some papers and found the one he wanted to hit us with first. "The beauticians claim we are dispensing a dangerous drug without prescription. They have brought suits to restrain our use."

Madame Elaine in her mannishly tailored suit was standing by a window staring out. She said, "The beauticians never gave us any break, anyway. Hell with them! What's next?"

Jennings lifted another paper. "I agree, but they sicked the Pure Food and Drug people on us. They tend to concur."

"Let them prove it first," the Old Hag said turning to the pixie's brother. "Eh, Bob!"

"It's harmless!" he protested, but I noticed that the pixie herself, for all her radiance, had a troubled look on her face.

The general manager lifted another paper. "Well, there seems to be enough doubt to have caused trouble. The Pure Food and Drug labs have by-passed the courts and put in a word to the Atomic Energy Commission. The AEC has cut off our supply of the fission salts that go into Atummion, pending tests."

That brought us all to our feet. Madame Elaine stalked back to the huge conference table and stared at Bob, the chemist. "How much of the gunk do we have on hand?"

"About a week's supply at present production rates." He was pale, and he swallowed his adam's apple three times.

The worst was yet to come. The pixie looked around the table peculiarly unchanged by the news. She had trouble in her face but it had been there from the start of the conference. "I wasn't going to bring this up just yet," she said, "but since we're here to have a good cry I might as well let you kick this one around at the same time. Maybe you won't mind shutting down production after all."

The way she said it froze all of us except the Madame.

The Madame said, "Well, speak up! What is it?"

"I've been to twelve different doctors, including eight specialists. I've thought and thought until I'm half crazy, and there just isn't any other answer," the pixie said.

She stared at us and clenched her fists and beat on the shiny table. "You've got to believe me! There just isn't *any* other answer. Atummion is responsible for my condition, and all twelve doctors agreed on my condition."

Still standing, Madame Elaine Templeton grabbed the back of her chair until her knuckles turned white. "Don't tell me the stuff brings on hives or something!"

The pixie threw back her head and a near-hysterical laugh throbbed from her lovely throat. "Hives, hell. I'm pregnant!"

Well, we were all very sorry for her, because she was unmarried, and that sort of thing is always clumsy. At that moment, however, none of us believed the connection between her condition and Atummion.

Being a distant relative of the Madame, she was humored to the extent that we had the lab get some guinea pigs and douse them with Elaine Templeton's After Bath Powder, and they even professed to make a daily check on them.

Meanwhile, production ground to a halt on all Atummion-labelled

products, which was everything, I think, but the eyebrow pencils.

With every drug-store and department store in the country screaming to have their orders filled, it was a delicate matter and took a lot of string-pulling to keep the thing off the front-pages. It wasn't the beautician's open charges that bothered us, because everyone knew they were just disgruntled. But if it leaked out that the AEC was disturbed enough to cut off our fission products, every radio, newspaper and TV commentator in the business would soon make mince-meat of us over the fact that Atummion had not been adequately tested before marketing. And this was so right!

We took our chances and submitted honest samples to the Bureau of Weights and Measures and the Pure Food and Drug labs. And held our breath.

The morning the first report came back in our favor there was great rejoicing, but that afternoon our own testing lab sent up a man to see Jennings, and he called me instantly.

"Sanford, get up here at once. The guinea pigs just threw five litters of babies!"

"Congratulations," I told him. "That happens with guinea pigs, I understand."

"You *don't* understand," he thundered at me. "This was test group F-six, all females, and every one has reached maturity since we bought and segregated them."

"There must be some mistake," I said.

"There better be," he told me.

I went to his office and together we picked up the Madame from her penthouse suite. She followed us into the elevator reluctantly. "Absurd, absurd!" was all she could say.

We watched the lab man check the ten adult pigs one by one. Even as inexpert as I am in such matters, it was evident that all ten were females, and the five which had not yet participated in blessed events were but hours from becoming mothers.

We went our separate ways stunned. Back in my office I pulled out a list of our big wholesale accounts where the Atummion products had been shipped by the carloads. The warehouses were distributed in every state of the union.

Then I ran my eye down the list of products which contained the devilish Atummion. There were thirty-eight, in all, including a complete line of men's toiletries, shaving lotion, shampoo, deodorant and body-dusting powder. I thanked God that men didn't have ovaries.

Dolores Donet—that was the pixie's name—opened my door and deposited herself gingerly in a chair opposite me.

I said, "You look radiant."

She said, "Don't rub it in, and I'll have a shot of that." I shared my Haig and Haig with her, and we drank to the newly departed bottom of the world.

My secretary tried to give me a list of people who had phoned and a stack of angry telegrams about back-orders, but I waved her away. "Dolores," I said, "there must have been a boy guinea pig loose in that pen. It's just too fantastic!"

"Are you accusing me of turning one loose just to get off the hook myself?" she snapped.

"What you've got, excuses won't cure," I told her, "but we've got to get facts. My God, if you're right—"

"We've sworn everyone to secrecy," she said. "There's a $10,000 bonus posted for each employee who knows about this. Payable when the statute of limitations runs out on possible litigation."

"You can't swear the public to secrecy," I said.

"Think a minute," she said, coldly. "The married women don't need excuses, and the single girls—who'll believe them? Half of them or better, have guilty consciences anyway. The rest? They're in the same boat I was—without a labful of guinea pigs to back them up."

"But—how did it happen in the first place?"

"Bob has been consulting the biologist we retained. He keeps asking the same question. He says parthenogenesis in higher lifeforms is virtually impossible. Bob keeps pointing at the little pigs, and they're going round and round. They're examining the other eleven test pens now, but there's no question in my mind. I have a personal stake in this experiment, and I was very careful to supervise the segregation of males and females."

My sanity returned in one glorious rush. *There was the bugger factor! Dolores, herself.*

In her eagerness to clear her own skirts, Dolores had tampered with the integrity of the experiment. Probably, she had arranged for artificial insemination, just to be sure. The tip-off was the hundred percent pregnancy of one whole test-batch. Ten out of ten. Even if one buck had slipped in inadvertently, and someone was covering up the mistake, why you wouldn't expect anything like a 100% "take".

"Dolores," I said, "you are a naughty girl in more ways than one."

She got up and refilled her glass shaking her head. "The ever-suspicious male," she said. "Don't you understand? I'm not trying to dodge my responsibility for my condition. The whole mess is my fault from beginning to end. But what kind of a heel will I be if we get clearance from the AEC and start shipping out Atummyc products again—knowing what I do? What's more, if we let the stuff float around indefinitely, someone is going to run comprehensive tests on it, not just allergy test patches like they're doing at the government labs right now."

"Yeah," I said, "so we all bury the hottest promotion that ever hit the cosmetics industry and live happily ever after."

She hit the deck and threw her whiskey glass at me, which did nothing to convince me that she wasn't telling the tallest tale of the century—to be conservative.

We sat and glared at each other for a few minutes. Finally she said, "You're going to get proof, and damned good proof any minute now."

"How so?" Nothing this experiment revealed would be valid to me, I figured, now that I was convinced she had deliberately fouled it up.

"Bob and the biologist should be up here any minute. I told them I'd wait in your office. I know something you don't, I'm just waiting for them to verify it."

She was much too confident, and I began to get worried again. We waited for ten minutes, fifteen, twenty. I picked up the phone and dialed the lab.

The woman assistant answered and said that the two men were on the way up right now. I asked, "What have they been doing down there?"

She said, "They've been doing Caesarian sections on the animals in test-pen M-four."

"Caesarian sections?" I repeated. She affirmed it, and Dolores Donet got a tight, little, humorless smile on her face. I hung up and said, "They're on their way up, and what's so funny?"

She said, "You know what I think? I think you've been using Atummyc products on you."

"So what?" I demanded. "I was responsible for this campaign, too. I've been waiting for a rash to develop almost as long as you have."

She said, "When Bob comes in, look at his complexion. All three of us have been guinea pigs, I guess."

"I still don't see what's so damned amusing."

She said, "You still don't tumble, eh? All right, I'll spell it out. Caesarians performed on test batch M-four."

"So?"

"The 'M' stands for male," she said.

She timed it just right. The hall door opened and Bob trailed in with a dazed look. The biologist was half holding him up. His white lab-smock was freshly blood-stained, and his eyes were blank and unseeing.

But for all his distress, he was still a good looking young fellow. His skin had that lovely, radiant, atomic look—just like mine.

… **THE END**

Also available on Feedbooks

Metrophage, *Richard Kadrey*

Welcome to Los Angeles... where anger, hunger, and disease run rampant, and life and hope are strictly rationed. This is Jonny's world. He's a street-wise hustler, a black-market dealer in drugs that heal the body and cool the mind. All he cares about is his own survival, until a strange new plague turns L.A. into a city of death--and Jonny is forced to put everything on the line to find the cure.

Botchan, *Natsume Sōseki*

Botchan (坊っちゃん) is a novel written by Natsume Sōseki (real name: Kin'nosuke Natsume) in 1906. It is considered to be one of the most popular novels in Japan, read by most Japanese during their childhood. The central theme of the story is morality. (from Wikipedia)

In its simplest understanding, "Botchan" may be taken as an episode in the life of a son born in Tokyo, hot-blooded, simple-hearted, pure as crystal and sturdy as a towering rock, honest and straight to a fault, intolerant of the least injustice and a volunteer ever ready to champion what he considers right and good. Children may read it as a "story of man who tried to be honest." It is a light, amusing and, at the name time, instructive story, with no tangle of love affairs, no scheme of blood-curdling scenes or nothing startling or sensational in the plot or characters. (from the translator)

War and Peace, *Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy*

War and Peace is a novel by Leo Tolstoy, first published from 1865 to 1869 in Russkii Vestnik, which tells the story of Russian society during the Napoleonic Era. It is usually described as one of Tolstoy's two major masterpieces (the other being Anna Karenina) as well as one of the world's greatest novels.
War and Peace offered a new kind of fiction, with a great many characters caught up in a plot that covered nothing less than the grand subjects indicated by the title, combined with the equally large topics of youth, marriage, age, and death. Though it is often called a novel today, it broke so many conventions of the form that it was not considered a novel in its time. Indeed, Tolstoy himself considered Anna Karenina (1878) to be his first attempt at a novel in the European sense.

Gargantua, *François Rabelais*

The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel (in French, La vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel) is a connected series of five novels written in the 16th century by François Rabelais. It is the story of two giants, a father (Gargantua) and his son (Pantagruel) and their adventures, written in an amusing, extravagant, satirical vein.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche*

Beyond Good and Evil (German: Jenseits von Gut und Böse), subtitled "Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future" (Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft), is a book by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, first published in 1886.
It takes up and expands on the ideas of his previous work, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, but approached from a more critical, polemical direction.
In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche attacks past philosophers for their alleged lack of critical sense and their blind acceptance of Christian premises in their consideration of morality. The work moves into the realm "beyond good and evil" in the sense of leaving behind the traditional morality which Nietzsche subjects to a destructive critique in favour of what he regards as an affirmative approach that fearlessly confronts the perspectival nature of knowledge and the perilous condition of the modern individual.

Babbitt, *Sinclair Lewis*

In this sardonic portrait of the up-and-coming middle class during the prosperous 1920s, Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951) perfectly captures the sound, the feel, and the attitudes of the generation that created the cult of consumerism. With a sharp eye for detail and keen powers of observation, Lewis tracks successful realtor George Babbitt's daily struggles to rise to the top of his profession while maintaining his reputation as an upstanding family man.
On the surface, Babbitt appears to be the quintessential middle-class embodiment of conservative values and enthusiasm for the well-to-do lifestyle of the small entrepreneur. But beneath the complacent facade, he also experiences a rising, nameless discontent. These feelings eventually lead Babbitt into risky escapades that threaten his family and his standing in the community.

Crome Yellow, *Aldous Huxley*

Crome Yellow is the first novel by British author Aldous Huxley. It was published in 1921. In the book, Huxley satirises the fads and fashions of the time. It is the witty story of a house party at "Crome" (a

lightly veiled reference to Garsington Manor, a house where authors such as Huxley and T. S. Eliot used to gather and write). We hear the history of the house from Henry Wimbush, its owner and self-appointed historian; apocalypse is prophesied, virginity is lost, and inspirational aphorisms are gained in a trance. Our hero, Denis Stone, tries to capture it all in poetry and is disappointed in love.

Les Diaboliques, *Jules Amédée Barbey d'Aurevilly*

Les Diaboliques est un recueil de six nouvelles de Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, paru en novembre 1874 à Paris chez l'éditeur Dentu.
Le projet de ce recueil de nouvelles devait s'intituler à l'origine Ricochets de conversation. Il fallut cependant près de vingt-cinq ans à Barbey pour le voir paraître puisqu'il y travaillait déjà en 1850 lorsqu'il fit paraître Le dessous de cartes d'une partie de whist dans le journal La Mode dans un feuilleton en trois parties, La Revue des Deux Mondes l'ayant refusé. Barbey revint en Normandie à la faveur des événements de la Commune et l'acheva en 1873.

The Education of Henry Adams, *Henry Adams*

The Education of Henry Adams records the struggle of Bostonian Henry Adams (1838-1918), in early old age, to come to terms with the dawning 20th century, so different from the world of his youth. It is also a sharp critique of 19th century educational theory and practice. In 1907, Adams began privately circulating copies of a limited edition printed at his own expense. Commercial publication had to await its author's 1918 death, whereupon it won the 1919 Pulitzer Prize.

Romeo and Juliet, *William Shakespeare*

Romeo and Juliet is a tragic play written early in the career of William Shakespeare about two teenage "star-cross'd lovers" whose untimely deaths ultimately unite their feuding households. It was among Shakespeare's most popular plays during his lifetime and, along with Hamlet, is one of his most frequently performed plays. Today, the title characters are regarded as archetypal "young lovers". (From Wikipedia)

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Food for the mind

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